

Message Text

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21

ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY SANTIAGO

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C O N F I D E N T I A L SANTIAGO 3443

EO 11652: GDS

TAGS: CI, PINS, SHUM

SUBJECT: POSSIBLE CHURCH/GOC CLASH ON HUMAN RIGHTS

1. SUMMARY. DETENTION, TORTURE, AND SUBSEQUENT ESCAPE INTO CHURCH CUSTODY OF ONE SERGIO ZAMORA IS SERVING TO BRING TO A HEAD CHURCH UNEASINESS OVER CONTINUED GOC HUMAN RIGHTS ABUSES AND COULD LEAD TO HEIGHTENED TENSION BETWEEN CATHOLIC CHURCH AND GOC. END SUMMARY.

2. RELIABLE CHURCH SOURCE CLOSELY CONNECTED WITH INTER-DENOMINATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR PEACE TOLD EMBOFF EVENING MAY 20 OF FOLLOWING INCIDENT.

3. MIDDAY MAY 15, AGENTS OF DIRECTORATE OF NATIONAL INTELLIGENCE (DINA) ARRESTED ONE SERGIO ZAMORA, ALLEGEDLY AN IMPORTANT MEMBER OF OUTLAWED SOCIALIST PARTY (PS) AND REPORTEDLY BELIEVED BY DINA TO BE THIRD-IN-COMMAND OF PS CLANDESTINE ACTIVITIES IN CHILE. HE WAS TAKEN TO A DINA INTERROGATION CENTER (PROBABLY VILLA GRIMALDI) WHERE HE WAS FORCEFULLY QUESTIONED FOR FIVE HOURS, INCLUDING THE APPLICATION OF A SUBSTANTIAL AMOUNT OF TORTURE. ZAMORA THEN ASKED TO BE TAKEN TO AREA NEAR PEACE COMMITTEE OFFICES WHERE HE PROMISED TO

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IDENTIFY A COMMITTEE EMPLOYEE WHO WAS ONE OF HIS "CONTACTS."

DINA AGREED. ONCE THERE, HOWEVER, ZAMORA SOMEHOW MANAGED TO BREAK AWAY FROM HIS CAPTORS AND, WITH TWO ARMED DINA OFFICERS IN HOT PURSUIT, TO RUN INSIDE COMMITTEE OFFICES WHERE HE PLEADED FOR "SANCTUARY." COMMITTEE EMPLOYEES SHIELDED ZAMORA FROM PURSUERS, WHO WITHDREW TO COMMITTEE DOORSTEP, AND THERE MATTER STOOD FORSEVERAL HOURS.

4. COMMITTEE EMPLOYEES, MEANWHILE, TELEPHONED THEIR PRINCIPALS, AND A GAGGLE OF CHURCHMEN HEADED BY AUXILIARY BISHOP OF SANTIAGO ALVEAR SOON ARRIVED. CARDINAL SILVA WAS INFORMED, AND HE IN TURN TELEPHONED PINOCHET TO ASK FOR REMOVAL OF NOW-REINFORCED DINA CORDON. PINOCHET AGREED, BUT SAID HE WOULD SEND A REPRESENTATIVE TO COMMITTEE HEADQUARTERS TO SEE ZAMORA SINCE HE DID NOT BELIEVE ZAMORA HAD REALLY BEEN TORTURED. DINA CORDON WAS WITHDRAWN AROUND 2230 HOURS, BKT NO REPRESENTATIVE OF PINOCHET APPEARED. FINALLY, AT MIDNIGHT, PEACE COMMITTEE MEMBERS DEPARTED OFFICES WITH ZAMORA TO SEEK MEDICAL ATTENTION FOR HIM SINCE HE EVIDENTLY WAS IN CONSIDERABLE PAIN. FIFTEEN MINUTES LATER PINOCHET'S AIDE-DE-CAMP ARRIVED, ACCCOMPANIED BY DINA CHIEF COL. MANUEL CONTRERAS. UPON LEARNING THAT ZAMORA WAS NO LONGER THERE, THEY LEFT IN EVIDENT ANNOYANCE.

5. NEXT DAY CARDINAL'S PERSONAL PHYSICIAN (WHO ENJOYS CARDINAL'S TOTAL CONFIDENCE) MADE DETAILED MEDICAL EXAMINATION OF ZAMORA, CONCLUDING THAT HE HAD BEEN SEVERELY TORTURED. DOCTOR FOUND SEVERAL CLEARLY IDENTIFIABLE CIGARETTE BURNS ON VARIOUS PARTS OF HIS BODY AS WELL AS NUMEROUS AND SERIOUS BURNS OF ANOTHER TYPE (ZAMORA REPORTEDLY CLAIMED THAT HE HAD BEEN TIED TO THE METAL SPRINGS OF A BED AND GIVEN REPEATED ELECTRIC SHOCKS). CARDINAL ALSO REPORTEDLY SAW ZAMORA AND WAS OUTRAGED, CONVOKING A MEETING OF CHURCH'S PERMANENT EPISCOPAL COMMITTEE FOR THAT AFTERNOON. MEETING, ALSO ATTENDED BY PAPAL NUNCIO, DECIDED TO FORWARD DOCTOR'S REPORT TO PINOCHET.

6. NUNCIO PRESENTED REPORT TO PINOCHET ON MAY 17. PINOCHET REPORTEDLY COMMENTED THAT HE WAS DUBIOUS OF DOCTOR'S REPORT AND WANTED A GOC DOCTOR TO EXAMINE ZAMORA, SINCE ZAMORA COULD BE A "CLASSIC CASE OF A PERSON WHO INFECTS PHYSICAL ABUSE UPON HIMSELF IN AN ATTEMPT TO EMBARRASS THE GOC." NUNCIO AGREED
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ONLY TO PASS PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE. MEANWHILE, ZAMORA REMAINS IN CHURCH CUSTODY.

7. SOURCE REPORTED THAT CARDINAL AND EPISCOPAL COMMITTEE HAVE HELD SEVERAL MEETINGS, LATEST BEING AFTERNOON OF MAY 20, TO DETERMINE CHURCH'S COURSE OF ACTION. APPARENTLY GENERAL AGREEMENT EXISTS THAT CARDINAL MUST MAKE A FORMAL (BUT NOT NECESSARILY PUBLIC) DEMARCHE TO PINOCHET ON HUMAN RIGHTS.

MIXED INTO HIERARCHY'S DELIBERATIONS ARE TWO OTHER CONSIDERATIONS, SOURCE ADDED. FIRST, CHURCH THROUGH PEACE COMMITTEE HAS CONFIRMED EVIDENCE OF DINA'S USE OF TORTURE AND BRUTALITY IN TWO OTHER RECENT CASES, EACH OF WHICH LED TO VICTIM'S DEATH (HERNAN HERRERA AND LUIS LAUSIC GLASINOVIC--BOTH REPORTED IN RECENT WASHINGTON POST STORIES BY CORRESPONDENT JOANN OMANG). ZAMORA CASE IS THEREFORE, IN A SENSE, THE LAST STRAW. SECONDLY, AS OUTGROWTH OF BISHOP'S CONFERENCE IN PUNTA DE TRALCA RETREAT IN APRIL (SANTIAGO 2266), BISHOPS BY AGREEMENT SENT PINOCHET A PRIVATE LETTER ON HUMAN RIGHTS SITUATION. COMMENT. NEITHER SOURCE NOR EMBASSY HAS SEEN THIS LETTER, BUT WE HAVE HEARD RUMORS OF ITS EXISTENCE FOR SEVERAL WEEKS. END COMMENT. CHURCH NOW UNDERSTANDS PINOCHET IS READY TO REPLY.

8. SOURCE CONCLUDED THAT ZAMORA AFFAIR IS SIGNIFICANT NOT BECAUSE OF SR. ZAMORA BUT BECAUSE IT IS FIRST TIME THAT CARDINAL AND OTHER SENIOR CLERGY HAVE HAD DINA'S USE OF TORTURE PERSONALLY AND FORCEFULLY BROUGHT HOME TO THEM. IN ADDITION, SINCE ZAMORA ESCAPED DIRECTLY INTO CHURCH HANDS FROM DINA, THERE IS NO ROOM FOR DOUBT THAT ZAMORA WAS INDEED A VICTIM OF DINA. CASE ALSO SERVES TO DISABUSE THOSE IN CLERGY WHO BELIEVED THAT BAN ON TORTURE AND FAMILY NOTIFICATION PROVISIONS IN NEW SECURITY LAW (SANTIAGO 3084 NOTAL) WOULD END DINA'S ABUSES.

9. COMMENT. COUPLED WITH GROWING RESTLESSNESS IN SOME CIRCLES WHICH HOPE FOR A MORE OUTSPOKEN STANCE BY THE CHURCH IN THE PROTECTION OF HUMAN RIGHTS (SANTIAGO 3231 NOTAL), ZAMORA AFFAIR COULD PRECIPITATE HEIGHTENED CHURCH-GOC TENSIONS, IN SPITE OF PERSONAL PREFERENCE OF CARDINAL TO WORK QUIETLY BEHIND THE SCENES.

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